DIVERSITY OF COMMUNITY SPACES AND ADAPTABILITY IN METHODOLOGICAL RESEARCH: A REGIONAL CASE STUDY IN FINLAND

Tomoya Wakayama1*, Markku Karjalainen2, and Momoko Tsuda3

1 & 2 Faculty of the Built Environment, Tampere University
3 Faculty of Education, Tampere University
*Corresponding author

Abstract

In recent decades, social diversity has led society to increasingly complex and widespread internationalisation, with people of different cultural backgrounds increasingly coming together. Similarly, in Finland, with the rapid expansion of immigration after the millennium, development of infrastructure such as accommodation, transportation systems and also communal places has been in significant demand, especially for immigrants who have already given birth to new generations of consequent multi-socio-backgrounds. Understanding of these backgrounds is essential when co-living in complex societies in local contexts. In this paper, we focus on youth centres (Nuorisokeskus in Finnish) in the Tampere (Finland) region as a case study to uncover hidden issues and execute quick solutions. The evaluation presented is based on an integrated community-oriented approach which measures user demands and systematically prioritises their demands. This approach is developed from stakeholder analysis in project management tools, with immediate effects for user participant spatial design. A community-oriented approach has a similar stakeholder participant design which directly influences the high-end user satisfaction rate, but also sustainability theory in the long term.

Keywords: youth centre, community-oriented, regional, participant design, sustainability

1. Introduction

Social diversity is a notable research topic in social sciences worldwide. Although in some circumstances the topic has been essential to understanding current societies, discussions relating to this topic have occurred in many fields of research – for example, research into the built environment and urban design (Nagy, 2006). Relevant circumstances are varied and depend on the fields of study in question, which include increased immigration, changes of life cycle and gender equality. Critically, the core element of such research is ease of connection with foreign cultures after the European immigration policy was adopted (Castles, 1995), while development of information technology has included increased usage of social networking services (SNS) (Schaar et al., 2013).
SNS have significant benefits and improved human lives, although their anonymity has led to significant crimes. This anonymity is useful and its main feature enables communication with anybody in the world. However, this is the main reason why cyber-crimes have occurred through the services and, typically, developing countries are facing problems associated with serious cyber-crimes which need to be solved immediately at country level (Kundi et al., 2014).

Immigration is another factor involved and consists of various backgrounds and types. For instance, immigrants do not only include refugees but also temporary/permanent workers, students and married couples. Immigrants are influenced by their foreign cultures in their daily lives with locals but also in their business, which has both positive and negative aspects. Yoshihama (2001) notes that married immigrants frequently experience domestic violence, and social issues often affect immigrant communities.

Indeed, social structural weaknesses in relation to immigrant support leads to crimes, especially in economically developing countries. According to Melossi’s research, expansion of acceptance of immigrants’ numbers in European countries has given them opportunities to commit various crimes (Melossi, 2003). Moreover, countries with coastlines have been facing problems with illegal immigrants, including their coming in their own boats from African and Arabic countries (Düvell, 2005). On the other hand, the increase in immigrants has solved problems with lack of labour in some European countries and highly skilled immigrants offer benefits to locals, enabling expansion of labour markets and national economies (Mahroum, 2001; Amuedo-Dorantes & De la Rica, 2007). For these main reasons, European countries have positively received immigrants in recent decades although issues are emerging related to infrastructure, such as shortages of accommodations leading to soaring prices (Daly, 1996).

Sweden is a notable Nordic country which welcomed immigrants early to influence the national economy after the Second World War, while, technological developments correlated with a decline in the economic position of immigrants between 1970 and 1990 (Scott, 1999). Currently, Nordic countries still open the door for refugees and any immigrants. However, the next generation needs improvement of social structures and new ways to make their lives better at society level. In this paper, we demonstrate the potential of sustainable development as a community-oriented approach to project management using a case study of youth centres in Tampere, Finland. The research method is based on a unique methodology and includes surveys, analysis and presentation of solutions.
2. Research background

2.1 Youth immigrants in Finland

In Finland, there are about 30,000 families with children in which at least one of the parents has a foreign nationality. In 40,000 families at least one of the parents has a foreign mother tongue (Miettinen Anneli). According to OECD statistics (2016), youth immigrants in Finland feel less stressed in their school lives. However, they tend to have difficulties in performing at school. For instance, 90% of students from Arabic-speaking countries settled in Finland reported feeling like they belong at school, but only 73% of students from these countries who settled in Denmark reported the same. On the other hand, Finnish students with immigrant backgrounds perform remarkably worse in problem solving, mathematics and reading according to OECD statistics, compared to non-immigrants (OECD, 2016).

2.2 Finnish youth centres

Finnish youth centres are organisations supervised and subsidised by the Ministry of Education and Culture, offering spaces and different kinds of experiences for young people in Finland. In general, most Finnish cities have their own youth centres to offer events for local children, teenagers and young adults up to 25 years old, although their main target group is students in comprehensive schools and high schools. As a comparison, we chose two different youth centres in Kämmenniemi and Hervanta in the city of Tampere.

However, so far, not many studies have been conducted into youth centres in Finland. There is a notable variety of types of youth centre across Finland. As they have developed in ways to suit their environment, it is difficult to describe the role of youth centres.

2.3 Notable issues

As youth immigrants have increased in number in Finland, youth centres have needed alternative solutions to manage customers and form a society free from racism. The issues created are various depending on youth centre location, while they are more severe in economically developed cities at this stage (such as the Helsinki metropolitan area, Turku, Tampere and Oulu) because immigrants are typically concentrated into these areas. Second, the needs of the youth generation have become more complex than before because of the rapid spread of online networks, especially for early-stage generations. For example, (often online) video games represent basic entertainment for kids and most kids play them already before entering school. Meanwhile, only a few people play outside when they have free time although there are multiple reasons for this (such as severe weathers). However, for future immigrants and new generations, a general solution is very much needed imminently.
3. Research method

The research methodology used is based on ‘situation analysis’, utilising stakeholder analysis to evaluate objectively, qualitatively and equally (Mitchell, 2006). In particular, we adapted part of Jackson’s problem tree analysis (Jackson, 1997) and developed it by using unique equations throughout the research. In this research, to prove the effectiveness of our approach universally, we chose two different youth centres in the Tampere region of Finland. Figure 1 shows the overall process behind this unique approach.

3.1 Pre-feedback

This feedback is based on an online or paper survey format to examine basic information from the participants. In this research, the main participants are teenage students between ten and 19 years of age and employers at two youth centres. We thus adopted a paper-based survey before the workshop, which was executed in Step 2. The aim for this feedback is not only collecting basic information but also analysing ‘core issue(s)’ in two centres for solution analysis. Before the integrated problem and solution analysis (Step 2) can be used, the situation of the proposed project or programme needs to be analysed. Answers to the following questions were collected in this feedback:

- Age group, gender, occupation and nationality
- Usage frequency and times for the youth centres
- Current adoption rate for unique ideas for the centres (1–10 scale)
- Current satisfaction rates for the centres (1–10 scale)
- Any problems in the centres (free form)

3.2 Integrated problem and solution analysis

Situation analysis is also called problem analysis. This research develops Jackson’s problem tree analysis (Jackson, 1997) and uses this analysis in workshops at each youth centre to evaluate effectiveness. ‘Problem tree analysis’ is part of problem analysis, but is not often used in all research fields. It is frequently used in only particular fields. However, the analysis is potentially effective in decision-making in project management and leads to sustainability. Moreover, a particular evaluation method for making decisions objectively and quantitively has not yet been defined.

3.2.1 Prevalent problem and solution analysis

The problem tree defines the core issues agreed by participants and adds new problems that emerge as the tree develops (Jackson, 1997). Ammanni et al. suggests that the analysis is suitable for a focus group of between approximately six and 25 carefully selected people (Ammanni et al., 2010). Furthermore, it is important that the factors can be added as conversations progress.
and discussions, debate and dialogue develop. Ammani et al. (2010) state that the following five steps can be identified in a problem tree analysis:

1. Identify major existing problems based upon available information.
2. Select one main problem for the analysis.
3. Identify important and direct causes of the focal problem and construct a tree showing these relationships.
4. Identify important and direct effects of the focal problem and construct a tree showing these relationships.
5. Review the entire problem tree, verify its validity and completeness and make necessary adjustments.


Solution analysis is also called objective tree analysis. It can be converted from problem tree analysis by reversing each of the problems into positive descriptions (Overseas Development Institute, 2009). The ODI notes that it is effective for projects and necessary for communication, citing a case study of designing an HIV/AIDS activity in Kenya.

However, there is no evidence of objective evaluation of the final solutions which the participants discussed using this analysis. The ODI suggests that ‘force field analysis’ is potentially useful for further steps (Overseas Development Institute, 2009). However, in this paper, we develop existing problems and use solution tree analysis to evaluate objectively and qualitatively.

3.2.2 Developed problem and solution analysis

These analyses are based on prevalent analyses which we mentioned in the previous section. The main difference is that solutions can be evaluated objectively and effectively. After creating solution tree(s) by reversing problem tree(s), participants are manually divided into relative solution groups in the tree(s) (solution groups A, B, C etc.) The mediator decides several evaluation criteria for solutions. In this research, we assumed the following criteria: cost, ease, energy, urgency, time and eagerness. An impact scale \(1 - 5 = \beta\) was used for discussion in participant groups utilising the criteria. The sums of each solution group are performance values \(= PV\) (Figure 1). To evaluate objectively, objective values \(= O\) are calculated by dividing performance values with absolute impact scale \(= |\beta|\) (Figure 2). The sums of objective values for each solution group are effective values \(= E\) (Figure 3). Prioritised rates for the solution groups \(= PR\) are evaluated by calculating the relative ratio of effective values (Figure 4). Each solution’s relative ratio \(= R\) can be calculated by dividing the solutions with the sum of the objective value.

\[
\beta_A + \beta_B + \cdots + \beta_z = PV
\]

\[
\frac{PV}{|\beta|} = O
\]

\[
O_A + O_B + \cdots + O_z = E
\]
\[
(E_1 + E_2 + \cdots + E_n)/n = PR
\]
\[
R_{An} = O_{An}/(O_{A1} + O_{A2} + \cdots + O_{An})
\]

### 3.3 Reflection and post-feedback

In these steps, actions analysed in previous steps are executed as agreed by participants and youth centres. Although integrated problem and solution tree analysis can define multi-criteria efficient solutions such as cost-efficient actions and time-efficient actions, the best solutions produced do not always represent the right answer as unpredictable phenomena are involved in using solutions against particular backgrounds. Singh (2014) notes that project management incorporates nine knowledge areas: time, cost, scope, quality, risk, procurement, human resources, communication and integration of these areas. Furthermore, cost, quality, time and scope are the key concerns of stakeholders to satisfy their demands. Thus, to avoid the complexity of these, we advise having internal meetings with professionals to confirm action plans. Moreover, action plans can be drawn up based on the results of integrated analysis, which can also reduce project timespan. Feedback design for evaluating the effectiveness of integrated analysis involves collecting data before and after analysis. The questionnaires are therefore similar to those in Step 1.

### 4. Results and analysis

The survey (Step 1) and workshop (Step 2) were held over two days – Kämmenniemi on May 17th 2019 and Hervanta on May 24th 2019 in each youth centre. Appendices A, B and C show the result of these analyses.

#### 4.1 Kämmenniemi youth centre

Kämmenniemi is a tiny village in the city of Tampere, also well known as a suitable location for summer cottages. There were three eventual participants in the workshop, although one of the workers in the centre noted that it is an appropriate venue located next to local schools. The facility is a standardised youth centre and well equipped. However, the participants mentioned notable issues, including the entertainment facility not being up to date. We discussed and agreed that the core problem related to few entertainment consoles and spaces in the current youth centre. After undertaking problem tree analysis, we worked out four solutions to resolve the core problem. Overall, the solution involved sharing video games with other youth centres and was evaluated as the most prioritised and effective solution, although it was also evaluated as inefficient under urgency criteria.

#### 4.2 Hervanta youth centre

The youth centre in Hervanta has varied cultural backgrounds as the region is home to a technical university, vocational university and kindergarten which all attract foreign immigrants. The customers for the centre thus consist of a variety of nationalities and the centre offers a range of programmes. As a result of the upcoming summer holiday, two youth participants and three workers attended the workshop. The current adoption rate of their ideas was 64.0%, which is slightly lower than at Kämmenniemi. Two youths suggested that their friends do not use the
youth centres, leading to identification of the core problem as young people not using the centre. The workshop proceeded steadily and a solution, paper- and SNS-based, evaluated as the best efficient solution for the core problem.

5. Discussion

Systematic/objective stakeholder analysis is essential to guide participatory project management regardless of nationalities, while it has typically been difficult to develop understanding between different cultures and languages. Finland has two official languages – Finnish and Swedish – but English is spoken widely. We realised that a dilemma often exists around using English in daily life in general, especially in suburbs. For example, young people could not concentrate for the full workshop period and started to talk in Finnish. Furthermore, this might be the cause of some structural issues in these analyses. We are thus currently developing these analyses in web-based format, enabling participation with personal smart devices, although we have to avoid the tool leading to less human communication.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Ms Suvi Tossavainen, co-ordinator of youth services in the city of Tampere, as well as all the young people and workers who participated in the survey and workshop and supported my work in this way. I am also grateful to the members of my research group for their patience and support in overcoming numerous obstacles faced throughout my research.
Appendix A: Kämmenniemi youth centre (May 17th, 2019)

- Participants: Three (one youth – 12–19 years old; two workers – over 20 years old) – all Finnish.
- Current adoption rate of their ideas: 76.6%. Current satisfaction rate of the centre: 63.3%.
- Other problems of concern at the centre are: opening hours, few events and few customers.
- Agreed core problem: few entertainment consoles and spaces in the current youth centre.
- Agreed solution A: organise fundraising by young people.
- Agreed solution B: making paper- and SNS-based advertisements.
- Agreed solution C: share video games with other youth centres.
- Agreed solution D: re-organise layout of furniture and paint walls.

Table 1: Multi-factor efficiencies with agreed objective values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<tr>
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Table 2: Absolute values of Table 1

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Table 3: Multi-factor efficiencies table, impact value and prioritisation rate

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<th>Eagerness efficiency</th>
<th>Impact value</th>
<th>Prioritisation ratio</th>
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<td>5.7</td>
<td>8.5</td>
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<td>25.8%</td>
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<td>8.5</td>
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<td>5.7</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
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Table 4: Relative ratio for multi-factor efficiencies

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Appendix B: Hervanta youth centre (May 24th, 2019)

- Participants: Five (two youths – 12–19 years old; three workers – over 20 years old) – all Finnish.
Current adoption rate of their ideas: 64.0%. Current satisfaction rate of the centre: 74.0%.

Other problems of concern at the centre: opening hours, old (institutional) furniture and few board games.

Agreed core problem: young people do not use the youth centre.

Agreed solution E: advertise in public, including paper- and SNS-based advertising.

Agreed solution F: organise recruitment auditions involving young people.

Agreed solution G: flexible working hours.

Agreed solution H: organise interesting activities involving customers.

Table 5: Multi-factor efficiencies with agreed objective values

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<td>3</td>
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<td>Solution F</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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Table 6: Absolute values of Table 5

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Table 7: Multi-factor efficiencies table, impact value and prioritisation rate

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Table 8: Relative ratio for multi-factor efficiencies

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Appendix C: Results for two youth centres with charts and graphs

Figure 1: Multi-criteria efficiency with relative ratio (Kämmenniemi)

Figure 2: Prioritisation rate (Kämmenniemi)  Figure 3: Relative radar (Kämmenniemi)

Figure 4: Multi-criteria efficiency with relative ratio (Hervanta)

Figure 4: Prioritisation rate (Hervanta)  Figure 5: Relative radar (Hervanta)

References


